

not mean that the future outcome was not welcome. But it does show that a single act, however intended, can create astounding results, even without great insight.

These men from our history were magnificent figures whose actions affected the future of America, making it a better place for posterity. But we do not have to be presidents of the country to make worthwhile contributions.

We do not have to see the final picture, or even plan something remarkable for our future in order to be "visionary." We needn't even focus on the results of our efforts. We only need to work toward what we believe in, making a personal effort to correct problems. The results will come, whether today or tomorrow.

Let's consider Rosa Parks. She was only an everyday-type person, a poor black seamstress who never had time for politics; she only tried to make enough to survive. One day as she sat on a bus, work out and tired, she was ordered to give up her seat to a white man. Non-violently, she refused and was arrested.

Her simple action became a catalyst for many others, starting an avalanche which turned into the Black Movement. Martin Luther King championed her very thoughts and feelings by organizing bus boycotts. Thousands of others added to the vision; many were poor, and many may have thought they had little to offer. But when all was done, the course of history was changed, once again. And equality for all minorities, not just Blacks, was promoted. But that was not the issue. The point was this: although Rosa was not the greatest martyr in history, she stood up for her beliefs, and that is how visions turn into reality.

How can you contribute to America's vision? It only takes a combination of your attitude and pride in your country. Being generous with your resources, helping out wherever possible, and using your abilities for good characterize a true contributor.

My individual piece of the final vision for America may not become as great as those of Thomas Jefferson's, Abraham Lincoln's, Rosa Park's, or even yours. But it will be just as important. I cannot guarantee world peace; I may not find a cure for the world's illnesses or put an end to starvation. I can, however, dedicate my efforts along with yours to the continued building of this great nation. After all, aren't our combined efforts today the way to create the greatest vision for America tomorrow?

#### A VICTORY FOR COMMON SENSE

### HON. GERRY E. STUDDS

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 3, 1995*

Mr. STUDDS. Mr. Speaker, some 18 months ago this House enacted legislation to codify the so-called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy barring gay and lesbian Americans from serving openly in the Armed Forces. The law thus placed on the statute books was an unprecedented exercise in overt, state-sanctioned discrimination. It was, from first to last, an irrational policy supported by nothing more than naked prejudice.

I stated at the time that I did not believe such a policy could survive constitutional scrutiny, and that the day would come when the courts would say so. On Thursday, March 30, 1995, Federal District Judge Eugene H. Nickerson fulfilled that prediction. In a 39-page opinion that is a triumph of decency and com-

mon sense, Judge Nickerson ruled in favor of six service members who challenged this cruel and unjust policy.

In striking down the law, the district court found it "demeaning and unworthy of a great nation to base a policy on pretense rather than truth." It also accurately characterized the scholastic distinctions on which the law relies as "Byzantine" and "Orwellian."

Since the decision was handed down, the court's conclusions have been echoed on editorial pages across the country. Few could surpass the editorial published on March 31, 1995 in the Cape Cod Times, which I am proud to insert in the Record.

#### A RICHLY DESERVED DEFEAT

It took a federal judge to tell President Clinton what a great many people have known for years to be true—his "Don't ask, don't tell" policy on gays in the military was a compromise full of flaws right from the start. Basically, the policy allows gays and lesbians to serve as long as they don't admit their sexuality to anyone. If they do, they will be handed an honorable discharge and booted through the gate.

Yesterday, U.S. District Court Judge Eugene Nickerson ruled that the policy is discriminatory, a violation of free speech and it forces people to lie. In short, he said, the policy is "inherently deceptive." The ruling involves, and applies to, only the six service personnel who filed the suit. The Defense Department will appeal.

This is the latest twist in a three-year debate that began when then-candidate Clinton made a rock-solid promise that if elected he would lift the ban entirely. That lit the fires, and the waffling started.

His first full year in office, 1993, was not a good one for The Pledge or the president. In January, the Pentagon and its supporters in Congress went on the offensive. The Joint Chiefs of Staff met with the Commander in Chief behind closed doors. When they emerged their only word was that it was a "constructive" meeting.

Two months later, in the semantic equivalent of jogging backwards, Clinton told his first televised press conference that he was now considering segregating homosexuals, which surprised even the military. Clinton fumbled that one, because it soon became clear he hadn't a clue as to how segregation could be done or whether it would even work (it wouldn't have—gays and lesbians aren't lepers).

As was inevitable, the gays struck back in a most telling manner. At the same time in May, 1993, that Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was on the road collecting comments from military and naval bases about gays in the military, Sgt. Jose Zuniga, the Sixth Army's 1992 "Soldier of the Year," was packing his bags at the Presidio in San Francisco. The richly honored Sergeant Zuniga had "come out" earlier in the month during a gay rights march in Washington, D.C. He did so to prove to anyone who happened to care that gays and lesbians can be as good servicemen and women as any of their straight peers—and in Zuniga's case, much better than most.

The argument that Senator Nunn and so many others believe—homosexuals are a danger to morale, are incapable of doing battle, are born molesters who can't resist putting the make on their God-fearing mates in uniform and all the other stuff—is dead wrong.

Sergeant Zuniga, who could have stayed in the closet until retirement and remained a role model for his troops, is proof of that. So are two Medal of Honor recipients and an Army nurse with the rank of colonel. She served with distinction in Vietnam and has a

medal to prove it, but she was later cashed in by the National Guard stateside because of her sexual orientation.

So are many others, who fought in wars or served in peace, all the while keeping their secret because of the fear of discharge or worse, should the straights find out.

One particularly egregious example of the mindset against gays resulted from the April 1989 explosion inside a gun turret aboard the battleship USS *Iowa* that killed 47 sailors. Looking for somebody to blame, the Navy settled on a young seaman who was killed, and put forth the story that he had caused the blast because he had been jilted by one of the victims.

Better that, they reasoned, than the truth, which emerged anyway, several months later: One of the propellant bags contained unstable explosive that went off when it was shoved into the breech. The story about the sailor was a crock, pure and simple.

As far back as October 1991, in a speech at Harvard, then-Governor Clinton made his position clear—at least, he thought he did—on permitting homosexuals to serve as equals in the military: It will be done. Thirteen months later came slippage. The then-president-elect said he would form a group to study the problem, "but I am not going to change my mind on it." So much for his pledge.

The frustration among gays and their sense of having been betrayed by the president is understandable. There is so much anger against them from society in general and the military in particular that it's truly a wonder that any of their orientation even dare enter the services.

But the fear of gays is largely based on an ignorance that breeds intolerance and is to be found not only in government institutions but among religious conservatives, who have become a political force now and will certainly have an effect in the 1996 elections.

Judge Nickerson's ruling is a victory for gays and common sense, though in context of the war over equality, this—alas—was but a skirmish.

Mr. Chairman, the six plaintiffs and their attorneys have won an important victory, not only for themselves but for all who have served and still serve with honor and distinction. It is a victory shared most of all by those who challenged earlier versions of the ban in years past only to have their pleas fall on deaf ears.

I fully expect that the Government will appeal this decision, and that the constitutionality of the ban will ultimately be revisited by higher courts. But whatever may happen in the months to come, today's ruling is the beginning of the end for a policy that is unworthy of our country and the brave service members who offer their lives in its service.

#### TESTIMONY BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, April 3, 1995*

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I just returned from one of the most moving hearings I have ever attended. Six survivors of the Chinese labor camp system, the Laogai, told their stories of life inside the prison. These are stories every Member of Congress and every American